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Consolidated report on the work of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council in 2004

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is aimed at assisting the Economic and Social Council in providing policy guidance to its functional commissions and in coordinating their work. It provides an analysis of selected major policy issues addressed by the commissions in 2004, using the Millennium Development Goals as a guide, and gives an overview of the main common themes that were covered by the commissions in 2004. It also examines the follow-up action by functional commissions to policy guidance provided by the Council in 2003 and reviews key issues relating to coordination or procedural aspects of the work of the commissions in 2004. The report contains a number of recommendations for consideration by the Council.

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I. Introduction

1. The present consolidated report has been submitted in response to agreed conclusions 2002/1[1] of the Economic and Social Council and earlier resolutions of the General Assembly and the Council.[2] The Council decided in its agreed conclusions that the outcomes of the functional commissions should be considered in the general segment on the basis of their reports and the consolidated report on their work, which should identify cross-cutting policy issues, gaps/overlaps and areas of complementarities and cooperation, as well as focus on substantive issues and highlight coordination issues requiring the Council's attention. While the Council took note of the report at its last session,[3] it did not provide guidance on the issues highlighted in the report. The General Assembly, in its resolution 57/270 B, emphasized, inter alia, the need to make better use of the report and to dedicate more time to its review.

II. Major cross-cutting policy issues addressed by the functional commissions in 2004

2. The work of the functional commissions covered a broad range of substantive issues related to the achievement of development goals contained in the outcomes of conferences and summits and the Millennium Declaration and addressed major cross-cutting policy issues directly related to the realization of these goals. The present report is focused on the contributions of the functional commissions to the achievement of various aspects of the Millennium Development Goals that are relevant to their areas of activity, with the aim of helping the Council to initiate the process of guiding the commissions regarding their contributions to the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly to be held at the commencement of its sixtieth session.

3. The major cross-cutting policy issues directly related to the Millennium Development Goals may be clustered in six broad areas, namely: poverty eradication; education; gender equality; health-related issues; environmental sustainability; and global partnership, including means of implementation. This is not an exhaustive list, although it covers important aspects of the eight Millennium Development Goals and provides a framework for consolidating the highlights of the work of the functional commissions.

A. Eradicating extreme poverty and hunger

Goal 1

4. The issue of poverty eradication was addressed by a number of commissions from their specific perspectives relevant to the goal of reducing the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day by half by 2015.

5. The Commission for Social Development focused its deliberations on the crucial role of the public sector in providing equitable, adequate and accessible social services to meet the essential needs of the entire population, in particular those excluded from social services. In this context, it reviewed measures needed for improving public sector effectiveness. It was emphasized that such measures should

include effective spending in strengthening public services, promoting human capital development, enhancing social equity and social protection. In addition, measures to improve public service delivery should aim at promoting the goals of universal and equitable access to those services, without discrimination, and at eradicating poverty, promoting full employment and fostering social integration.

6. Hunger and extreme poverty were identified by the twelfth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development as major obstacles to the achievement of sustainable development. The Commission recognized that these obstacles should be addressed as cross-cutting issues during policy formulation in various sectors, particularly in the critical areas of water, sanitation and human settlements, which were on the agenda of the Commission at its twelfth session. Integration of various aspects would help in strengthening linkages between the policies and programmes to achieve the various Millennium Development Goals.

7. The United Nations Forum on Forests urged countries to integrate sustainable forest management into their national poverty eradication and development strategies. During the panel discussions and multi-stakeholder dialogue, the issues of governance and capacity-building, in particular increasing the role of community-based forest management in local economic development, the importance of local capacity-building and the enhancement of local stakeholder participation in decision-making were highlighted as important means of achieving Millennium Development Goal 1.

8. While the Commission on the Status of Women did not address the goal of poverty eradication as such, its deliberations focused on policies and legislation that eliminate gender inequality in the workplace, including the wage gap between men and women. It stressed that the property, inheritance, and education rights of women must be provided for and protected. Policies in these areas have direct and indirect implications for achieving the goal of poverty eradication.

9. Review and appraisal of progress made in implementing the goals and objectives of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development was the main focus of discussion at the thirty-seventh session of the Commission on Population and Development. The linkage between population pressure, poverty and hunger is widely acknowledged. Efforts to achieve Millennium Development Goal 1 must include policies to address demographic issues. In this context, the Commission stressed that the effective implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and key actions would make an essential contribution to the achievement of internationally agreed development goals.

10. The importance of human rights, including the right to development in the eradication of poverty, has been repeatedly emphasized by the Commission on Human Rights. At its sixtieth session, the Commission called for the continued commitment, in both the developed and the developing world, to poverty alleviation initiatives such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development and the World Solidarity Fund for the Eradication of Poverty. The Commission also placed particular emphasis on poverty alleviation strategies for victims of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. The Commission has brought to attention this unique dimension, which should be considered as part of the national and international policy frameworks for achieving Millennium Development Goal 1.

11. The role of science and technology in achieving the development goals cannot be overemphasized. To address this aspect, the seventh session of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development focused on the theme of "Promoting the application of science and technology to meet the development goals contained in the Millennium Declaration". The policy recommendations by the Commission address the issue of poverty eradication in the larger context of development. For instance, Governments have been encouraged to increase expenditure on research and development in the field of science and technology to at least 1 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) in order to address the needs of development. In order for developing countries to meet the Millennium Development Goals, they need to harness simple and mature technologies, access new and emerging technologies and build a solid scientific and technological base for the development and adaptation of these technologies to local conditions. In this context, the Commission has recognized the importance of the creation of national science advisory bodies as well as a broad-based, people-centred and multi-stakeholder approach in policy-making.

B. Achieving universal primary education

Goal 2

12. The goal of ensuring that by 2015 children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling has been indirectly addressed by a number of commissions.

13. In its agreed conclusions, the Commission on the Status of Women called on Governments, as well as other relevant participants, to ensure equal access of women to social services, in particular to education. The issue of access holds the key to the realization of Millennium Development Goal 2.

14. The Commission on Human Rights stressed that the right to education for children should be defended in all situations. In addition, it addressed policies for the achievement of this Millennium Development Goal. The Commission called on Governments to take all necessary legislative measures to prohibit discrimination in education on the basis of race, colour, descent, national, ethnic or social origin, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, property, disability, birth or other status.

15. The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues,[4] at its third session, underscored the importance of Goal 2 for indigenous women and girls. To that end, the Forum emphasized that Member States should consider the adoption and full implementation of comprehensive national indigenous education policies. States should ensure that indigenous children have access to education, including instruction in their mother tongue. The Forum also addressed the issue of racism and suggested that the promotion of anti-racism education, including strategies to empower young people to deal with racism, will help advance the cause of universal primary education.

16. The fourth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests provided an interesting perspective on the linkages between education and the sustainable management of forests. In many cases, tree products require less labour than industrial products, thus freeing children to attend school. It was also observed that

incorporation of instruction on tree cultivation in primary education may provide an incentive for greater school enrolment, thus contributing to the realization of Goal 2.

C. Promoting gender equality and empowerment of women

Goal 3

17. There is global recognition of the contribution that women make to economic development and the cost to societies of the persistent inequalities between women and men. Most of the commissions therefore shared the view that realization of Goal 3 regarding the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women would make a significant contribution to the achievement of most of the Millennium Development Goals.

18. The Commission on the Status of Women encouraged Governments to adopt measures to ensure equal access for women to education, property and inheritance rights and to promote access to information technologies and business and economic opportunities, including international trade. Policies in these areas should enable women to participate fully and equally in economic and political decision-making.

19. At the twelfth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, it was stressed that the issue of gender equality should be integrated into all aspects of the work of the Commission, particularly in the review of progress in the implementation of goals and objectives. While recognizing the central role of women in sustainable development, it was emphasized that women need to be included in planning and policy-making in the areas of water, sanitation and human settlements. Creating nuclei of women in small towns and cities who could network with other women to exchange learning experiences on sustainable development was cited as a good practice for empowering women, and one which could be replicated.

20. The United Nations Forum on Forests, at its fourth session, emphasized that women should be given a greater role in forest management and decision-making at all levels and in all institutions. The great potential of networks and associations of women and other stakeholders for capacity-building, empowerment and more effective participation in decision-making was also stressed. In its decisions, the Forum urged greater involvement and effective participation of women in the development, decision-making, implementation and practice of sustainable forest management.

21. At its sixtieth session, the Commission on Human Rights focused on the housing aspect of gender equality and called on Governments to work to enable women to obtain affordable housing and access to land by removing all obstacles to access, with special emphasis on meeting the needs of women living in poverty and of female heads of household.

22. The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues adopted a large body of recommendations on indigenous women, which was the special theme of the session. These recommendations focused on: support programmes that address the growing problem of domestic violence against indigenous women and children; access for indigenous women to funding from public budgets; specific measures that enhance women's participation in their own development process; and national policies that generate employment for indigenous women.

23. The Forum recommended the launching of a new initiative involving various stakeholders, including the Inter-Agency Support Group, the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), to address the urgent issues of trafficking in women and the migration of indigenous women.

24. The Commission on Science and Technology for Development encouraged the adoption of concrete measures to increase the enrolment of girls and women in the scientific and engineering disciplines in order to ensure their representation in decision-making processes and policy setting in these fields as well as to enable them to use more efficient technologies in their productive activities.

D. Addressing health issues, including child mortality, maternal health, HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

Goals 4, 5 and 6

25. The health-related Millennium Development Goals, which focus on the issues of reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, and combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, were addressed in varying degrees by the commissions, all of which emphasized the centrality of health in realizing the overarching goals of poverty eradication and sustainable development.

26. Most commissions did not address the issue of maternal health directly at their sessions this year. However, the Commission on Population and Development affirmed its commitment to universal reproductive health care, which is a prerequisite to maternal and children's health.

27. The participants at the fourth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests emphasized that access to sufficient and adequately nutritious food was a key determinant of children's health. The importance of trees in providing food and many medicinal products that can be used to prevent and cure childhood diseases was also underscored.

28. The spread of HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases remains at epidemic levels, affecting all aspects of development. Several functional commissions addressed the issues surrounding HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases and provided policy recommendations. The Commission on the Status of Women stressed that gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls were fundamental elements in the reduction of their vulnerability to HIV/AIDS and emphasized that the advancement of women and girls was key to reversing the pandemic. The Commission also urged Governments and other actors to encourage the active involvement of men and boys in eliminating gender stereotypes as well as gender inequality, in particular in relation to sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS. The Commission on Human Rights addressed two aspects of health-related Millennium Development Goals. Firstly, the Commission called upon States to guarantee the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest standard of physical and mental health. Secondly, the Commission adopted a resolution on access to medication in the context of pandemics, such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, calling on States to develop and implement national strategies to realize the goal of access for all to prevention and care-related goods, services and information.

29. The Commission on Population and Development expressed concern about the spread of HIV/AIDS and decided that the special theme for its thirty-eighth session in 2005 will be "Population, development and HIV/AIDS, with particular emphasis on poverty".

30. The Commission on Narcotic Drugs, at its forty-seventh session, focused special attention on HIV/AIDS, urged further international cooperation on HIV/AIDS in the context of drug abuse and called on the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, in coordination with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), to convene an intergovernmental expert group to develop specific programmes on the main issues of HIV/AIDS and drug abuse. The Commission decided that HIV/AIDS prevention in the context of drug abuse would be one of the focus areas for its thematic debate at its forty-eighth session. The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice also addressed the issue of combating the spread of HIV/AIDS in criminal justice pre-trial and correctional facilities.

31. The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues recommended that all development partners fully incorporate the principle of health as a fundamental human right in all health policies and programmes and foster rights-based approaches to health. To augment HIV/AIDS programmes, the Forum recommended that educational materials be provided in indigenous languages, and that specially trained indigenous HIV/AIDS health workers conduct outreach services and home care to indigenous communities. The Forum called on States to accredit traditional indigenous health practitioners (physicians) and traditional birth attendants (midwives) and integrate them into State health-care systems.

E. Ensuring environmental sustainability

Goal 7

32. Environmental sustainability is a critical factor for meeting most of the Millennium Development Goals. Realization of all of the Goals is closely linked to the management of the natural resource base for promoting economic and social development. This issue was addressed at the twelfth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development in the context of discussions on water, sanitation and human settlements. It was emphasized that the issue of sustainability should be mainstreamed by strengthening linkages between various sectors, in particular water, sanitation and human settlements. Considering the theme of the current session, it was suggested that development of the water sector needs to be integrated into the poverty reduction strategy paper process. Similarly, the issues of sanitation and human settlement should be an important part of the overall development policy.

33. The Commission on Human Rights adopted a resolution urging all Governments to take appropriate legislative and other measures, in line with their international obligations, to prevent the illegal international trafficking in toxic and hazardous products and wastes from developed to developing countries, which has serious implications for environmental sustainability.

F. Global partnership for development

Goal 8

34. The functional commissions repeatedly called for strengthening the global partnership,[5] including means of implementation, in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

35. The Commission for Social Development recognized the important role the United Nations system and international financial, trade and economic institutions and bilateral donors could play through an integrated and coherent approach in assisting Governments in the developing world. It was recognized that achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, demands a new partnership between developed and developing countries.

36. At its twelfth session, the Commission on Sustainable Development cited the lack of financial resources, technology transfer and capacity as the major challenges and constraints for developing countries in meeting the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the Millennium Development Goals. A broad-based appeal was made for development partners, in the spirit of mutual accountability, to move towards meeting all the commitments made at the International Conference on Financing for Development in the Monterrey Consensus and to target an increased amount of funding specifically for investments in water, sanitation and human settlements. It was emphasized that the partnership approach taken at Johannesburg and beyond could be a valuable and important modality to leverage additional resources for sustainable development. It was stressed that advances in science and technology could facilitate achievement of the long-term goals of sustainable development.

37. Also during the Commission's twelfth session, Ministers stressed that strong institutions and good governance were essential to ensure proper and efficient use of scarce government resources and affordable service delivery to the poor. Democratic and inclusive participation of all stakeholders, the rule of law, conducive regulatory environments, accountability, transparency and corporate social responsibility, including efforts to combat corruption, were recognized by Ministers as important dimensions of good governance. Political stability and security and sound economic management were also recognized as particularly important for mobilizing investment and productive private-sector entrepreneurial initiatives. Good governance at the international level was crucial to providing an enabling environment for sustainable development. The Commission for Social Development underlined that improvement of public sector effectiveness requires that all countries strive to eliminate corruption at all levels. The Commission on Human Rights recalled that accountable and transparent governance at the national and international levels is critical for the creation of an environment that facilitates the development of democratic, prosperous and peaceful societies. The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice invited development partners to strengthen their collaboration with providers of technical assistance in promoting the rule of law.

38. At its seventh session, the Commission on Science and Technology for Development also recognized the need for new partnerships between developed and developing countries aimed at helping achieve the internationally agreed

development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration. In this regard, the Commission was called on to explore the possibility of establishing new initiatives involving important development partners, such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development, with a view to enhancing closer South-South and North-South collaboration in the area of science and technology.

39. The United Nations Forum on Forests discussed the importance of finance and external donor assistance in a number of contexts. In its final decisions, the Forum reaffirmed that the issues of finance and transfer of environmentally sound technologies are cross-cutting, interlinked and essential for the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests.

40. In the area of population, the Commission on Population and Development called for increased commitment of financial resources and the mobilization of international assistance to accelerate the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and to achieve the goals set for 2015. In this regard, building and sustaining partnerships was considered crucial in order to strengthen the capacity of developing countries.

41. The Commission on Human Rights stressed the need to implement the heavily indebted poor countries initiative and encouraged exploration of innovative initiatives.

G. Basic indicators

42. The Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs leads the preparation of indicators and analysis of the Millennium Development Goals for the Secretary-General's annual report on the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration. This work is undertaken through the Inter-Agency and Expert Meeting on Millennium Development Goal Indicators, which meets at least once a year to review methods, standards and available data for the agreed indicators and reviews and analyses trends for each of the quantifiable goals and targets. As part of its coordinating role in the global monitoring of the Millennium Development Goals and targets, the Statistics Division also maintains the Millennium Indicators Database, with country data provided by the responsible international agencies on the agreed indicators and related statistical series.

43. Over the last decade, the Statistical Commission has frequently recommended actions to promote the development of indicators suitable for monitoring goals and objectives set out in international programmes, including Agenda 21, the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development, the Beijing Declaration and Programme of Action, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the Monterrey Consensus, as well as in the Millennium Development Goals, and has stressed the importance of a coordinated approach at the international level and of support to developing countries in building basic statistical capacities to meet their own development needs, as well as to provide quality statistics for international use. The Commission agreed that it should keep the further development of Millennium Development Goal indicators and other development indicators for international monitoring under review. The objective is to ensure their technical soundness and to eliminate duplication and overlap in data requests to countries.

44. The Statistical Commission also concluded that further investment in sustainable statistical capacities, especially in countries with less developed statistical services, was required to improve the availability of statistics for the needed indicators and noted the importance, in this context, of the Marrakesh Action Plan, adopted at the Second International Roundtable on Managing for Development Results, held in Marrakesh, Morocco, in 2004.

45. At its seventh session, the Commission on Science and Technology for Development highlighted the crucial importance of technological indicators and benchmarks in monitoring and assessing progress. In this regard, the Commission will explore the feasibility of preparing and producing an annual "World Technology for Development Report", which would include: technology achievement indicators and benchmarks; a review of emerging technologies and related policies; as well as best practices and case studies on the application of science and technology for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The Commission will also consider the feasibility of developing a reliable tool to monitor implementation and benchmark progress in the achievement of some of the Goals.

Recommendations

The Economic and Social Council may wish to:

(a) **Request its functional commissions and other relevant subsidiary bodies to contribute to the Council's high-level segment and other segments dealing with the themes related to the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly to be held in 2005;**

(b) **Encourage commissions to further promote synergies among themselves with regard to their work towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals;**

(c) **Encourage the Commission on the Status of Women to continue its catalytic role and to contribute systematically to the work of other functional commissions by providing practical guidance on gender mainstreaming;**

(d) **Request all international organizations to ensure coherence and collaboration with requests for data on conference indicators;**

(e) **Encourage further investment in sustainable statistical capacities.**

III. Contribution of the functional commissions to the work of the Economic and Social Council

46. In its agreed conclusion 2002/1, the Council invited its functional commissions to provide inputs to the overall theme of the Council's coordination and high-level segments as they relate to their area of work. In earlier resolutions, for example in resolution 2001/27, the Council stressed that the inputs of the functional commissions should be concise and action-oriented and that, in this regard, they could utilize, as applicable, their standing agenda item on new trends and emerging issues affecting the overall goals within their mandates.

A. High-level segment

47. The timing of the Council's selection of the theme for its high-level segment makes it difficult for some of the functional commissions to make specific contributions. In addition, there is no specific modality to link the theme of the high-level segment with the multi-year programmes of work of the commissions, which compounds the difficulty the commissions face in making substantive contributions. These issues may need to be addressed by the Council. Some commissions, nevertheless, provided specific contributions to this year's high-level segment on the theme "Resources mobilization and enabling environment for poverty eradication in the context of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010".[6]

48. The Commission on the Status of Women will transmit a note to the Council providing an overview of actions recommended in the Beijing Platform for Action, the outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and agreed conclusions of the Commission pertaining to women and poverty in the least developed countries.

49. The Statistics Division published the *World Statistics Pocketbook — Landlocked Developing Countries* as a contribution to the segment and also launched two related projects, the *Handbook on Poverty Statistics: Concepts, Methods and Policy Use* and a development account project for the period 2004-2006 to strengthen statistical capacity in the region of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

50. As its input to the high-level segment of the Council, the United Nations Forum on Forests held three panel discussions at its fourth session on: the role of forests in achieving broader development goals; implementation with a focus on Africa; and implementation with a focus on small island developing States. Policy recommendations from the Chairman's Summaries for these discussions will be submitted to the Economic and Social Council.

B. Coordination segment

51. The coordination segment of the Council in 2004 will be devoted to two themes: "Coordinated and integrated United Nations system approach to promote rural development in developing countries, with due consideration to least developed countries, for poverty eradication and sustainable development" and "Review and appraisal of the system-wide implementation of the Council's agreed conclusions 1997/2 on mainstreaming the gender perspective into all policies and programmes of the United Nations system".

52. There are no specific inputs provided by any functional commission on the first theme. On the latter theme, dealing with the gender perspective, the Commission on the Status of Women adopted a resolution entitled "Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system" and recommended that the Council incorporate, in its review and appraisal of the system-wide implementation of its agreed conclusions 1997/2, an assessment of the remaining gaps and challenges in the framework for gender equality policies and strategies and the mainstreaming of gender perspectives into all policies and programmes.

C. Operational activities segment

53. At the operational activities segment, the Council will discuss the triennial comprehensive policy review of the operational activities for development of the United Nations, reviewing effectiveness of development cooperation, funding, reforms, country level capacity of the United Nations development system and participatory dimensions of development cooperation.

54. There are no specific contributions by any commission on this particular theme. However, the segment may consider the issue of strengthening linkages between the work of the commissions and funds and programmes. The linkage has become increasingly important, as the United Nations system is putting greater emphasis on implementation of the outcomes of its conferences and summits.

55. The enhanced focus on implementation in the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development is expected to contribute to a broadening of the scope and reach of operational activities of the United Nations system by creating stronger linkages between normative work at the global and country level on implementation measures. For this purpose, the Commission has invited United Nations agencies, funds and programmes to participate actively in its work and to provide information about their ongoing work in the field. The Commission also promotes partnerships at the operational level that include Member States, organizations of the United Nations system and other relevant actors.

56. In order to improve its contribution to the Council's activities, as well as to enhance its outreach and impact, the Commission on Science and Technology for Development urged all entities of the United Nations system working in the areas of science and technology to participate actively in its work.

57. As part of its mandate, the United Nations Forum on Forests promotes implementation of proposals for action for sustainable forest management and aims to enhance system-wide cooperation to that end. The Collaborative Partnership on Forests has made significant progress in streamlining and harmonizing country reporting on forests.

58. While the commissions are taking steps to enhance linkages with the funds and programmes, there is a need for a system-wide approach on the links between normative and operational work. The triennial comprehensive policy review provides an opportunity for the Council to explore how it could strengthen these linkages, including through the operational activities segment.

Recommendations

The Council may wish to:

(a) **Consider ways of promoting closer and more effective interaction between the work of the functional commissions and that of the governing bodies of United Nations funds and programmes and of ensuring that United Nations funds and programmes draw, as appropriate, on relevant policy guidance from the commissions;**

(b) **Invite its commissions and their secretariats to clearly identify the operational implications of their work and bring these to the attention of the**

governing bodies of funds and programmes for their consideration and guidance on operational activities.

D. Humanitarian affairs segment

59. The theme of the humanitarian affairs segment in 2004 is "Strengthening of the coordination of United Nations humanitarian assistance: present and future challenges". During the segment, two panel discussions will be held on the themes: "Strengthening preparedness and response to natural disasters, with an emphasis on capacity-building"; and "Field-level coordination for the purpose of continuing the presence and operations of United Nations humanitarian assistance missions in higher risk environments". While the theme of the segment was not addressed as such, the Commission on the Status on Women did address some aspects of the humanitarian assistance relevant to the work of the Council.

60. The Commission on the Status of Women invited the United Nations system, international and non-governmental organizations and donors to ensure the full and effective participation of Afghan women in all stages of humanitarian assistance, recovery, reconstruction and development; called upon the international community to provide assistance and services in an effort to alleviate the dire humanitarian crisis being faced by Palestinian women and their families; and encouraged the continued collaboration of UNAIDS and other United Nations agencies, as well as the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and other international organizations to address and reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS as part of humanitarian efforts.

IV. Follow-up by the functional commissions to the guidance of the Economic and Social Council

61. The functional commissions were informed of the outcome of the Council's session in July 2003 in a letter dated 31 October 2003 from the President of the Council to the chairpersons of the commissions. The President drew the particular attention of the chairpersons to the call made by the Council for renewed political will to realize the global partnership launched at United Nations conferences and summits.

62. The President also referred to Council resolution 2003/6, in which the Council decided to take the necessary steps for the effective implementation of the provisions of General Assembly resolution 57/270 B that are relevant to the work of the Council and its subsidiary machinery. The Assembly requested each functional commission "to examine its methods of work in order to better pursue the implementation of the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits, recognizing that there is no need for a uniform approach since each functional commission has its own specificity, while also noting that modern methods of work can better guarantee the review of progress made in implementation at all levels, on the basis of a report with recommendations to be submitted by the Secretary-General to each functional commission and relevant subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council on their methods of work, in accordance with the provisions defined by the respective outcomes and relevant decisions taken by each body, bearing in mind the progress recently achieved in this

regard by certain commissions, especially the Commission on Sustainable Development; the functional commissions and other relevant bodies of the Economic and Social Council should report to the Council no later than 2005 on the outcome of this examination".

A. Working methods of the functional commissions

63. Although the final submission by the functional commissions to the Economic and Social Council is not due until next year, the commissions have started to review their methods of work and several of them have already introduced innovations this year with due regard to the specificity of the mandate of each commission.

64. In response to the mandate provided by the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the Commission on Sustainable Development, at its eleventh session, in 2003, reorganized its future work into a series of two-year action-oriented "implementation cycles", in which the first year of the cycle is a "review session" and the second, a "policy session". The Commission adopted a multi-year programme of work from 2004 until 2017 and also decided to strengthen implementation at the regional level, particularly through the United Nations regional commissions. It is too early to evaluate the effectiveness of this approach. However, the initial feedback is encouraging and positive.

65. As mandated by resolution 57/270 B, the Secretary-General submitted separate reports with recommendations for consideration by the Commission on Social Development and the Commission on the Status of Women. In his reports, the Secretary-General, inter alia, encouraged the functional commissions to produce more focused outcomes on priority themes, adopt biennial programmes of work, involve the entities of the United Nations system, seek increased contributions of regional commissions in their work, strengthen linkages with other functional commissions, engage and facilitate the active participation of civil society and the private sector in their work and consider how they may wish to contribute to the "major event" in 2005[7] called for in United Nations General Assembly resolution 57/270 B.

66. At its twelfth session, the Commission on Social Development held an initial exchange of views on the report of the Secretary-General covering various aspects of its working methods and decided to continue consideration of these issues in 2005. The Commission on the Status of Women noted that progress had already been made in revising the Commission's methods of work and the Bureau was requested to continue considering the methods of work of the Commission before the next session in 2005. At its thirty-fifth session, in 2004, the Statistical Commission asked its Bureau to conduct an examination of the working methods of the Commission in support of coordinated follow-up to United Nations conferences and summits and to present the outcome of the examination to the Commission at its next session. The Commission on Population and Development decided to consider its methods of work at its next session in 2005 and requested the Secretary-General to submit a report to the Commission. The United Nations Forum on Forests will undertake a complete review of its working methods at its fifth session in 2005. The Commission on Narcotic Drugs has been reviewing its working methods since its forty-sixth session (November 2003) and will continue working on these issues. The

Commission on Science and Technology for Development[8] decided to limit the length of its regular sessions to one week and to reduce the number of intersessional panel meetings.

67. The Commission for Social Development, the Commission on the Status of Women, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, the Commission on Population and Development, the United Nations Forum on Forests, the Commission on Science and Technology for Development and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice have changed the timing of the election of their incoming bureaux to take place immediately following the closure of their regular sessions. They have encouraged participation of experts and more interaction between representatives of non-governmental organizations, the private sector and other actors. The Commission for Social Development, the Commission on the Status of Women, the Security Council, the Commission on Sustainable Development, the United Nations Forum on Forests and the Commission on Science and Technology for Development have adopted multi-year programmes of work while, at the same time, making use of a standing agenda item on "Emerging issues, trends, and new approaches", thereby maintaining flexibility and topicality in their work.

Recommendation

The Council may invite its functional commissions to continue to examine their methods of work in order to better pursue the implementation of the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits, with a view to submitting their reports by 2005.

B. Reports of the functional commissions to the Economic and Social Council

68. Owing to the creation of new bodies and requests for new reports, the number of documents issued by and submitted to the subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council has increased considerably, leading to an overload of documentation. The number of such reports can only be reduced by restraint, both in the Council and in its subsidiary bodies, for requests for documentation and by streamlining the reports on their work.

69. Reducing the volume of documentation is a worthy end in itself, but the nature and quality of reporting should also be considered. The Bureau of the Council has recently issued guidelines for documentation for the Council and its subsidiary bodies. These guidelines reiterate General Assembly resolution 58/250, in which the Secretary-General was requested to direct all departments to include the following elements in reports originating in the Secretariat: a summary of the report; consolidated conclusions, recommendations and other proposed actions; and relevant background information. The Council, in its resolution 1999/55, encouraged the functional commissions, in their outcomes, to identify more clearly actions that require a coordinated United Nations system-wide response as well as to highlight recommendations specifically addressed to the Council and other organizations of the United Nations system. The reports of the functional commissions should focus on substantive issues and highlight issues of coordination, coherence and harmonization requiring the Council's attention.

70. In addition to the steps outlined above, further steps could be taken to reduce the volume of reports of the functional commissions and the subsidiary bodies of the Council in a balanced way, cutting across the subsidiary apparatus. Increasing presentation of oral reports, particularly with regard to progress reports and reports that are presented on an annual basis, could help in this area. The background of reports should be presented orally or posted on the Internet, and the focus of written reports should be to provide analysis on policy issues and recommendations. These steps should, however, take into account the specific requirements of each commission and the need to ensure that the reports capture all the details of the meetings of the commissions.

71. Encouraging the submission of a single "consolidated" report on related topics under a single item or sub-item of the agenda, taking into account similar reports requested by other intergovernmental bodies, could help in streamlining reports. Biennialization or triennialization of the consideration of agenda items or sub-items could also decrease the number of reports generated. The functional commissions could also follow the practice adopted by the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, which organizes electronic discussion forums and produces fewer and more concise reports.

Recommendations

The Economic and Social Council may wish to:

(a) **Further encourage the functional commissions to adhere to the guidelines regarding their reports to the Council. In doing so, the commissions should identify more clearly issues that require a coordinated United Nations system-wide response;**

(b) **Encourage its subsidiary bodies to consider presenting oral reports on issues that do not require extensive deliberations by the Council;**

(c) **Consider consolidation of reports that deal with closely related topics, including making this report a part of the report on the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of major United Nations conferences and summits.**

C. Coordination and cooperation among the functional commissions

72. The most common means employed by the functional commissions to enhance coordination on issues of mutual concern continues to be through the exchange of reports and other documents, joint activities and contacts between the various secretariats. Since the substantive secretariats of five of the functional commissions are located within the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, they have greater opportunity to discuss their work programmes, areas of common concern and ways to give consistency and coherence to the work of the functional commissions. In addition, the bureaux of the commissions have also taken steps to enhance coordination in the work of the commissions.

73. The Commission on the Status of Women organized a high-level round table, in collaboration with the Statistical Commission, on "Gaps and challenges in measuring progress in implementing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for

Action". Participants shared practical experiences, and lessons learned on the use of statistics in measuring progress towards the achievement of gender equality.

74. The Commission on the Status of Women has continued its close collaboration with the Commission on Human Rights. At its sixtieth session, the Chairperson of the Commission on Human Rights again addressed the Commission on the Status of Women during the general debate. As in previous years, the Chairperson of the Commission on the Status of Women attended the session of the Commission on Human Rights and addressed the Commission under the agenda item entitled "Integration of the human rights of women and the gender perspective".

75. The Bureau of the Commission on Population and Development met with the Bureau of the Commission on the Status of Women to exchange views on modalities for the review and assessment of the outcomes of major conferences.

76. The Statistical Commission continues to circulate relevant extracts of its reports to the secretariats of the other functional commissions. The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs continue their close collaboration, and are benefiting from the increased synergies achieved by the establishment of a unified secretariat section, which now provides common servicing for both commissions.

77. The United Nations Forum on Forests collaborates closely with the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. The Chairman of the Permanent Forum addressed the Forum on Forests on the opening day of its fourth session as part of the panel discussion on forests and the broader development goals. The Forum on Forests also reported on outcomes of the discussion on traditional forest-related knowledge at the third session of the Permanent Forum. The Forum on Forests also continues its collaboration with the Commission on Sustainable Development.

78. The Commission on Science and Technology for Development cooperates with the United Nations Information and Communication Technologies Task Force and the United Nations Millennium Development Goals Task Force on Science, Technology and Innovation. The Commission, through its Gender Advisory Board, also works closely with the Commission on the Status of Women and its secretariat.

79. The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues met with the Special Rapporteurs of the Commission on Human Rights on the human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples and on violence against women, its causes and consequences and with the Chair of the Commission on the Status of Women.

D. Cooperation with the Economic and Social Council

80. As mandated by the Council in its resolutions 1998/46 and 2001/27, annual meetings took place once again in 2004 between the Bureau of the Council and the bureaux of the functional commissions. The secretariat of each functional commission produced a discussion paper to provide information for the deliberation of issues of interest to both the Council and the commissions. Overall, discussion centred around the work of the commissions in 2004, their possible contribution to the work of the Council, measures to enhance collaboration among the functional commissions and review of their methods of work. The general view was that these meetings serve a very valuable purpose as they help to promote greater coherence in

the work of the Council and its functional commissions. In addition, a meeting of the chairpersons of the functional commissions as well as a dialogue session with the Council is planned during the general segment of the Council in 2004.

Recommendation

Encourage the bureaux of the functional commissions to focus their joint meetings and meetings with the Bureau of the Council around cross-cutting issues in order to develop a common approach to dealing with these issues.

Notes

[1] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 3* (A/57/3/Rev.1), chap. V, sect. A.

[2] See General Assembly resolutions 50/227 and 52/12 B, Council resolutions 1991/1, 1998/46, 1998/47, 1998/49, 1999/51 and 2001/27.

[3] E/2003/90.

[4] The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues is not a functional commission, but a subsidiary body of the Council with expert functions.

[5] Almost all the commissions addressed the issue of providing necessary resources and means to ensure achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. In this context, Goal 8, encompassing various elements of the global partnership for development, provides the necessary tools to look at policies in areas of finance, governance, trade, external debt and technology.

[6] The Secretary-General has recommended the theme "Achieving the development goals of global conferences, including the Millennium Development Goals: challenges and opportunities" for the high-level segment of the Council in 2005.

[7] The General Assembly in its resolution 58/291 decided to convene, in 2005, a high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly with the participation of heads of State and government.

[8] Subsequently endorsed by the Council in its decision 2003/291.

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Social and human rights questions: Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

Report of the Secretary-General on the preliminary review by the Coordinator of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People on the activities of the United Nations system in relation to the Decade*

Summary

The present preliminary review of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People, together with the information received from the United Nations agencies and funds, other international organizations and the Secretariat, provides a summary of activities undertaken by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations system during the period from 1995 to 2004. Summaries are also included of the information received from seven States and six indigenous organizations. The report concludes by noting the advances in the area of inter-agency cooperation on indigenous issues, the establishment of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and the position of Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people and the implementation of the activities contained in the programme of activities adopted by the General Assembly. However, despite the important institutional developments that have taken place in the framework of the Decade, the report acknowledges that indigenous peoples in many countries continue to be among the poorest and most marginalized. It also notes that the adoption of a declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples, one of the main objectives of the Decade, has not been achieved. The report considers that further efforts are needed by the Member States concerned and the international community to ensure that all indigenous peoples everywhere enjoy full human rights and enjoy real and measurable improvements in their living conditions.

* The present report was presented after the deadline established by the Documents Control Section in order to include additional information provided by States and non-governmental organizations.

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I. Background

1. The present report, which is submitted to the Economic and Social Council pursuant to Council decision 2003/306 of 25 July 2003, provides information on and analysis of activities undertaken by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights as Coordinator of the International Decade, as well as a summary of information provided by departments and organizations of the United Nations system, Member States, indigenous peoples, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and others. The International Decade will end in December 2004, and it is anticipated that a further report on the Decade, including additional information from interested parties, will be submitted to the Council at its substantive session of 2005.

2. The International Decade, which began on 10 December 1994 and ends on 10 December 2004, was proclaimed by the General Assembly in its resolution 48/163 of 21 December 1993. In the following year, in its resolution 49/214 of 23 December 1994, the Assembly decided that the Decade would have an operational focus to implement its goals and that its theme would be "Indigenous people: partnership in action". In its resolution 50/157 of 21 December 1995, the General Assembly adopted a programme of activities for the Decade. The main objective of the Decade is the strengthening of international cooperation for the solution of problems faced by indigenous people in areas such as human rights, the environment, development, health, culture and education. The General Assembly identified further the following specific objectives:

(a) Specialized agencies of the United Nations system and other international and national agencies, as well as communities and private enterprises, should devote special attention to development activities of benefit to indigenous people;

(b) The education of indigenous and non-indigenous societies concerning the situation, cultures, languages, rights and aspirations of indigenous people, including, in particular, efforts in cooperation with the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education;

(c) The promotion and protection of the rights of indigenous people and their empowerment to make choices that enable them to retain their cultural identity while participating in political, economic and social life, with full respect for their cultural values, languages, traditions and forms of social organization;

(d) The further implementation of recommendations pertaining to indigenous people of all high-level international conferences and, in particular, consideration of the implementation of the recommendation by the World Conference on Human Rights to establish a permanent forum for indigenous people in the United Nations system;

(e) The adoption of the draft United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples and the further development of international standards as well as national legislation for the protection and promotion of the human rights of indigenous people, including effective means of monitoring and guaranteeing those rights.

3. In addition to these general objectives, the General Assembly proposed a number of United Nations observances and recommended activities that could be carried out by the major actors, including the Coordinator, the then Centre for

Human Rights, now the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat, the United Nations system, regional organizations, Member States, indigenous peoples, NGOs and others. Within resolution 50/157, adopting the programme of activities, and in subsequent resolutions relating to the Decade, there were a number of other requests, including the recommendation that special attention be given to improving the extent and effectiveness of the participation of indigenous people in planning and implementing the activities of the Decade.

4. In the course of the International Decade, the Secretary-General and the Coordinator of the Decade have provided annual reports to the General Assembly, the Commission on Human Rights and the Working Group on Indigenous Populations. At the mid-point of the Decade, a review was submitted to the General Assembly[1]. It is recommended that these reports be considered by the Council should Member States require further detailed information on the activities undertaken, in particular by the Coordinator of the Decade.

5. In order to undertake a comprehensive review of the Decade, OHCHR wrote to Member States, organizations of the United Nations system, indigenous peoples' organizations and NGOs and requested, in particular, information that might assist the Coordinator in evaluating progress during the 10-year period and identifying existing challenges facing indigenous peoples at the end of the Decade.

6. As at 20 May 2004, information had been received from 7 Member States, 16 United Nations departments and organizations and 6 indigenous peoples' organizations. The Coordinator would like to take this opportunity to express her appreciation to those who have written detailed responses, which are summarized in the present report. The full submissions of United Nations agencies will be made available as addenda to the present report. Submissions of Member States and indigenous peoples are available through the OHCHR secretariat. The Office is also in the process of holding a series of participatory consultations as part of its efforts to evaluate the Decade. The Office organized a consultation on the Decade and circulated questionnaires during the sixtieth session of the Commission on Human Rights, the fourth Continental Meeting of Indigenous Women of the Americas held in Lima in April 2004, and at the third session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. The Office plans to hold further consultations during the meeting of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations in July 2004 and the meeting of the Working Group on the draft declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples in September. OHCHR, in cooperation with the members of the Advisory Group for the Voluntary Fund for the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People, will hold a two-day seminar in Geneva on 15 and 16 July 2004 to evaluate the activities financed by the two voluntary funds for indigenous peoples undertaken during the Decade. An evaluation of the Indigenous Fellowship Programme will also be undertaken during the World Youth Festival, to be held in Barcelona on 6 and 7 August, with the participation of approximately 70 indigenous persons who have benefited from the OHCHR's human rights training programme developed during the Decade. The full reports of these two evaluations will be made available as part of a further report on the Decade.

II. Implementation of the programme of activities

Activities of the Coordinator and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and developments in human rights

7. The Coordinator of the International Decade is responsible for promoting implementation of the objectives outlined in General Assembly resolution 50/157 and realizing the activities enumerated in paragraphs 11 to 25 of the programme of activities that specifically address the human rights programme. The following section of the report looks at initiatives of the Coordinator aimed at advancing the objectives of the Decade and reports on the implementation of human rights activities. A list of the principal activities carried out by OHCHR in the human rights area during the period from 1995 to 2004 is contained in an addendum to the present report.

8. The programme of activities for the International Decade set out recommendations for the Coordinator and OHCHR,[2] including the establishment of an indigenous peoples' unit, the secondment of qualified indigenous staff and the creation of an indigenous fellowship programme. These recommendations have been implemented and further information provided in the present report. The Coordinator was also asked to create an advisory group and a board of trustees.[3] Both bodies have been established. The Coordinator was asked to organize meetings on themes of concern to indigenous peoples, open a roster of indigenous experts, encourage partnership programmes with Governments, United Nations agencies and indigenous peoples and develop training in human rights. At its ninth session, the Advisory Group recommended to the Coordinator that she prepare a publication on the Decade and its achievements and challenges. It is expected that this publication would be ready during the first part of 2005.

Strengthening international cooperation

9. The main objective of the Decade is the strengthening of international cooperation for the solution of problems faced by indigenous peoples. In particular, the specialized agencies are invited to give attention to development activities benefiting indigenous peoples. In the course of the Decade, the Coordinator sought to implement this part of the programme through the promotion of inter-agency cooperation and the creation of opportunities for greater direct contacts between indigenous representatives and the United Nations system.

10. Early on in the Decade it was recognized that the programmes relating to indigenous peoples run by United Nations agencies were quite disparate, difficult to compare, and largely unknown outside of the project areas. The Secretary-General's review of United Nations mechanisms relating to indigenous peoples, submitted to the General Assembly in 1996, affirmed that United Nations organizations indeed carried out numerous projects for indigenous peoples, but that there was no effective inter-agency cooperation to promote the rights and development of indigenous peoples.

11. The shortcoming was addressed by the broadening in the course of the Decade of an informal inter-agency consultation established prior to 1994 by the Centre for Human Rights and the International Labour Office which came to include most organizations of the United Nations system, such as the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), the Food and

Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB). The annual meetings of the inter-agency consultation provided an opportunity for an exchange of information on indigenous issues and took place at the time of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations, thereby encouraging contacts with representatives of indigenous peoples. Permanent missions were also invited to take part. These meetings led to better understanding among agencies of projects and programmes on indigenous peoples in other sectors and resulted in efforts to cooperate on joint activities. Within the framework of the Decade, ILO, UNESCO, WIPO, UNITAR and WHO collaborated in the OHCHR-run Indigenous Fellowship Programme, which, over the past eight years, has provided up to six months of training in the United Nations and human rights to resource persons from indigenous communities. The ILO has launched a similar programme, focusing on its Convention Number 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, in cooperation with United Nations agencies and UNITAR, on negotiation and conflict resolution skills for indigenous representatives.

12. The Working Group on Indigenous Populations also plays a vital role in facilitating and encouraging inter-agency cooperation on indigenous issues and direct contacts between agencies and programmes and the international movement of indigenous peoples. United Nations agencies hold informal briefings for indigenous peoples. UNDP and the World Bank, for example, organized consultations with indigenous representatives to elaborate their internal policy guidelines, and ILO organized briefings on its Convention Number 169.

13. A number of seminars and workshops have been organized cooperatively by United Nations agencies with the purpose of increasing indigenous participation, pooling funding and broadening inputs from the United Nations system. A good example of such an activity was the seminar on multiculturalism in Africa, which took place in Botswana in 2001. In addition to the participation of governmental officials, indigenous organizations and human rights experts, including the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people and a member of the Working Group on Minorities, ILO, UNESCO and WHO supported the participation of experts in their areas of work and the UNDP Resident Coordinator facilitated a one-day discussion with the representatives of the United Nations country team and the participants. As a follow-up, UNESCO, ILO and OHCHR jointly funded a human rights training workshop in Cameroon for forest-dwelling indigenous peoples in Central African countries. UNDP and several NGOs have collaborated closely with OHCHR in relation to the two voluntary funds for indigenous peoples. UNDP has assisted with follow-up to a number of project grants to indigenous organizations and the NGOs Centre for Documentation, Research and Information and the

International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs have worked closely with the United Nations travel fund for indigenous peoples.

14. OHCHR has also cooperated in joint activities with UN-Habitat to prepare a publication on indigenous peoples and the right to adequate housing and with the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre to develop a digest on indigenous children. More recently, an indigenous component was added to the joint OHCHR/UNDP Human Rights Strengthening Programme, aimed at building human rights capacity in UNDP country offices. The aim of the project is to broaden the sensitivity and understanding of indigenous peoples' rights among UNDP and United Nations country teams, promote the institutionalization of indigenous participation in the planning, implementation and evaluation of United Nations programmes at the country level and support the application of rights-based development that takes into account indigenous perspectives and priorities. A pilot activity was organized jointly by UNDP and OHCHR in Ecuador in March 2004 and a second pilot will be organized in Kenya in June 2004.

15. A proposal made by the World Conference on Human Rights in 1993 to consider the establishment of a permanent forum for indigenous people was incorporated as an objective into the programme of activities of the Decade. The Permanent Forum was finally established by Economic and Social Council resolution 2000/22. The Forum held its first session in May 2002, but the successful realization of the new body was not a foregone conclusion. Only a minority of Member States were convinced of the need to create a high-level body within the United Nations with indigenous membership, and even some indigenous representatives were sceptical about the recommendation, which they feared might lead to the loss of existing spaces open to them. The workshop in Copenhagen in 1995, organized by the Government of Denmark and OHCHR, and a second workshop in Santiago de Chile in 1996, helped broaden the consensus on the proposed new body. In 1999 and 2000, the Commission authorized two sessions of an ad hoc working group to elaborate a formal proposal for a permanent forum.

16. In 2001, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights wrote to the heads of United Nations departments and organizations asking them to support the establishment of a more formalized inter-agency group to strengthen cooperation on indigenous issues and prepare for the first session of the Permanent Forum. It was agreed to establish the Inter-agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues, which would meet regularly and on a rotating basis among the agencies to promote inter-agency cooperation on indigenous peoples and interact with the Permanent Forum.

17. The Secretary-General requested the High Commissioner to organize the first session of the Permanent Forum in May 2002. The Forum was attended by the Secretary-General, the Deputy Secretary-General, the Administrator of UNDP, the Head of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the High Commissioner and Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, indigenous leaders, elders, spiritual guides, youth and women's representatives and representatives of Governments. Since the secretariat responsibility for the Permanent Forum has been taken up by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, OHCHR and all members of the Inter-agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues established to foster system-wide cooperation have been active participants in its sessions.

Promotion and protection of the rights of indigenous peoples

18. The programme of activities for the International Decade identified as objectives of the Decade the promotion and protection of the human rights of indigenous peoples, their empowerment to make choices that enable them to retain their cultural identity and their participation in political, economic and social life. The adoption of the draft United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples before the end of the Decade would be an essential vehicle for the achievement of these objectives.

19. The establishment of the position Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples by the Commission on Human Rights was a major achievement for the protection of the rights of indigenous peoples. In April 2004, the Commission unanimously renewed the mandate of Rodolfo Stavenhagen (Mexico), the Special Rapporteur, for a further three-year period, and recommended that he address the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session in 2004. The Special Rapporteur will have an opportunity to bring the human rights situation of indigenous peoples to the attention of the highest body of the United Nations at the precise moment when the outcomes of the International Decade and future challenges are being considered.[4]

20. Other thematic and country rapporteurs of the Commission, independent experts and special representatives of the Secretary-General and the treaty bodies also play an important role in this regard. The Special Rapporteurs addressing religious intolerance, racism, human rights and the environment and other human rights defenders include, on a regular basis, both in their general reports and in their reports on country missions, specific information and recommendations relating to indigenous peoples. The Special Rapporteur on indigenous peoples has, on several occasions, signed joint letters to Governments with the Special Representative on human rights defenders with regard to cases of alleged human rights violations. In June 2004, the annual meeting of Special Rapporteurs of the Commission on Human Rights will include a discussion on how cooperation on indigenous peoples' issues can be furthered.

21. The treaty bodies have issued concluding observations on country reports as well as general comments on indigenous peoples such as those made in recent years by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the right to adequate housing (general comment 7), the right to adequate food (general comment 13) or the right to the highest attainable standard of health (general comment 14), which are contributing to a growing body of jurisprudence on the rights of indigenous peoples. The interest of indigenous peoples in the work of the treaty bodies is reflected by the request made by Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues at its second session that the Secretary-General undertake an analysis of their work in relation to indigenous peoples. In 2003, the Committee on the Rights of the Child held a general discussion day on the rights of indigenous children, with the participation of indigenous peoples, including youth representatives (see www.unhchr.ch). In 2004, an indigenous expert was elected to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

22. Studies by the Subcommission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights provide analysis of human rights issues, propose possible new standard-setting, make recommendations to the parent bodies and offer a framework for action by NGOs and other actors. In the course of the Decade, four studies on

indigenous issues have been prepared: on indigenous peoples and their relationship to land; on the protection of the heritage of indigenous peoples; on indigenous peoples' permanent sovereignty over natural resources; and on treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements between States and indigenous populations. The studies provide background to relevant articles in the draft United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples and include recommendations for action by Member States and the international community. In addition to these studies, the Subcommission has adopted draft principles and guidelines on the heritage of indigenous people and submitted them to the Commission on Human Rights.

23. The adoption of a declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples was identified by the General Assembly as an objective of the Decade. In 1995, the Commission on Human Rights established a working group with the task of reviewing the draft proposed by the Subcommission. As at May 2004, two of the 45 articles of the draft declaration have been adopted at first reading and, in view of the slow progress, the Commission, at its 2004 session, recommended that additional meetings be held. In 2003, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Chairperson of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the Chairperson of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations and the Special Rapporteur on indigenous peoples wrote to the Chairperson of the Working Group of the Commission to stress the urgency of moving the declaration forward. It is now considered unlikely that the draft declaration will be adopted by the General Assembly before the end of the Decade.

Building human rights capacity

24. Special attention was given in the programme of activities to strengthening knowledge and practical expertise in human rights of indigenous organizations and integrating the indigenous dimension into the programme of activities of the International Decade for Human Rights Education. OHCHR was specifically requested to establish a fellowship programme for indigenous peoples. The principal activity organized by OHCHR to advance this aim is the Indigenous Fellowship Programme, under which indigenous fellows proposed by their organizations stay for a period of up to six months at OHCHR. The beneficiaries are offered the opportunity to develop a good knowledge of human rights, gain practical experience and receive direct training from specialists, including OHCHR staff, independent human rights experts and diplomats. The programme includes briefing sessions by several United Nations agencies, including WIPO, UNITAR or UNDP and NGOs such as the World Wildlife Fund and the NGO Centre for Documentation, Research and Information as well as induction courses of two weeks at ILO in Geneva and UNESCO in Paris.

25. The objective of the programme is to contribute to the creation of a new generation of indigenous human rights activists with a good technical background and practical experience that can be used by their communities. Fellows are expected to return to their communities and carry out their own training programmes on human rights, thereby creating a significant multiplier effect. The indigenous advisers to the programme recommended that the beneficiaries did not necessarily need to hold academic qualifications but should be active in their organizations, a decision that has ensured the participation of many community activists who have not had the opportunity to pursue formal studies. In using the term "fellowship", the

programme aims to convey the idea that human rights training in Geneva also allows the integration of indigenous persons into United Nations offices, bringing them into daily contact with staff who can also draw on this unique experience.

26. The programme, supported initially by the Voluntary Fund for the Decade, is now established as an annual activity of OHCHR and is financed through the Organization's regular budget. The initial programme was offered only in English, but it has now been expanded to include a Spanish-speaking component, run in cooperation with the University of Deusto in Bilbao, Spain, and partly funded by the government of that region, and a French-speaking component run in cooperation with the University of Bourgogne in Dijon, France. More than 75 indigenous persons from 37 countries have followed this intensive programme. The programme has served as a model to other United Nations organizations. A similar project is now in place at ILO and others are planned at UNESCO and by the secretariat of the Permanent Forum. An external evaluation to which all former and current fellows are invited has been funded by the Barcelona Forum 2004 and will be organized in August and the findings made available in a follow-up report of the Coordinator.

27. In support of the indigenous fellowship programme and to provide user-friendly and appropriate human rights training materials, OHCHR has published the *United Nations Guide for Indigenous Peoples* in English, French, Russian and Spanish. The guide is designed to provide indigenous peoples with practical information on the operations and procedures of the United Nations and its various agencies related to human rights and development. It has been widely disseminated to indigenous organizations.

Raising awareness of indigenous issues

28. **Seminars and workshops**: In the course of the Decade, the Coordinator organized seminars, workshops and consultations to raise awareness of indigenous issues, including on indigenous peoples and land rights, research and higher education, administration of justice, treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements with States, the media, the heritage (intellectual and cultural property) of indigenous peoples, women, multiculturalism in Africa, private sector natural resource companies and human rights, and sustainable development. A list and brief description of the principal meetings held during the Decade will be contained in Addendum 1 to the present report.

29. The seminars have provided opportunities to raise critical, sensitive and occasionally contentious issues at the international level and to bring together indigenous and governmental experts for an exchange of views and experiences. They offered a space for hearing both negative experiences and best practices and they produced recommendations, drawn from a wide range of participants and regions, which help to build consensus on solutions. It is believed that indigenous concerns and their distinct cultures and ways of life are better understood by the international community as a consequence.

30. **Media**: The programme of activities of the International Decade called for the promotion of indigenous networks of indigenous journalists and the launching of indigenous journals. In consultation with a group of indigenous journalists, OHCHR organized, in cooperation with the Spanish-based news agency EFE, a workshop in Madrid on indigenous media, allowing, for the first time, consultations among a diverse group of indigenous media representatives, including Navajo radio

journalists from the United States of America and Kanak radio journalists of New Caledonia, television journalists from indigenous peoples in Canada, newspaper journalists from Panama, Kenya and the Philippines and an owner-editor of a community newspaper. From the perspective of OHCHR, indigenous media represent a potential means of communicating information on international activities relating to indigenous peoples to the communities as well as a source of early warning about human rights violations. In 2000, a second workshop on indigenous media was organized in United Nations Headquarters in New York. In 2001, OHCHR invited indigenous journalists to attend and file their own stories on the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, held in Durban, South Africa. On the occasion of the first session of the Permanent Forum, the Office, in cooperation with the Washington-based NGO Advocacy International, helped indigenous journalists launch an international indigenous media web site.

31. **A focus on Africa**: The Working Group on Indigenous Populations of the Subcommission and the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues have both recommended that OHCHR make a particular effort to hold activities relating to indigenous peoples in Africa. Given the complexity of the question in the region, the Office chose to hold a series of workshops on the theme of multiculturalism, including participants from minority, indigenous and ethnic groups, Governments and experts, as well as representatives of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. In the course of the Decade, meetings were held in Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania, with the participation of indigenous peoples of East Africa, in Kidal, Mali, with the participation, in particular, of the Amazigh peoples, and in Gabarone, Botswana, in which indigenous peoples and minorities from the southern African countries participated. In cooperation with the Yaoundé Centre for Human Rights, ILO and UNESCO, a workshop for pygmies was organized, which brought together indigenous peoples from seven central African countries.

Voluntary funds

32. The Voluntary Fund for the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People was established by the General Assembly in its resolution 49/214 to support activities of the Coordinator. On the advice of the advisory group, the Coordinator has used the funds to assist indigenous organizations own projects and to undertake activities of OHCHR such as seminars, workshops or human rights training in line with the objectives of the Decade programme.

33. The Voluntary Fund has supported 176 indigenous projects in the following countries: Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Bangladesh, Belize, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Burkina-Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador, El Salvador, Ghana, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kenya, Mali, Mexico, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, New Caledonia, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Paraguay, Philippines, Russian Federation, Rwanda, South Africa, Sweden, Thailand, Togo, Uganda, Ukraine, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America and Venezuela. The projects have been proposed, implemented and evaluated by indigenous organizations that must send narrative and financial reports on completion of the activity. Grants do not exceed $15,000 and generally average between $5,000 and $10,000. Projects include human rights training sessions, support for publications, activities aimed at strengthening indigenous organizations and newsletters and are particularly aimed at

grassroots organizations that do not have other funding possibilities. During the Decade, up until May 2004, the Voluntary Fund had received contributions totalling more than $2.2 million. A full list of the projects funded is contained in the reports of the Fund to the annual sessions of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations.

34. At its ninth session, the Advisory Group for the Voluntary Fund for the International Decade decided to recommend to the Coordinator that she organize a seminar to evaluate the impact of the activities financed by the Voluntary Fund for the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People and the Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations, together with the beneficiaries of the Funds. The seminar will be held in Geneva on 15 and 16 July 2004 and the report will be made available as an addendum to a further report on the outcomes of the Decade.

35. As of May 2004, the Voluntary Fund for the International Decade had received contributions from the following States: Denmark ($984,857), Norway ($407,515), Japan ($301,525), the Netherlands ($153,700), France ($94,805), New Zealand ($75,316), Germany ($72,629), Canada ($72,799), Australia ($47,102), Greece ($30,000), Chile ($16,000), Switzerland ($14,666), Saudi Arabia ($10,000), Thailand ($10,000), Cyprus ($9,490), Algeria ($5,000), Fiji ($3,000), Luxembourg ($2,454), Tunisia ($1,600), Colombia ($1,000) and Bolivia ($1,000). Denmark, the Netherlands and Norway have supported the work of the Office on indigenous peoples by providing associate experts and other qualified staff. France and New Zealand have also seconded consultants to assist in the work mandated under the Decade.

36. The United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations, established in 1985, provides financial assistance to representatives of indigenous communities and organizations to enable them to attend sessions of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations. The General Assembly has expanded the mandate of the Fund twice to allow it to assist indigenous representatives to take part in the open-ended intersessional Working Group of the Commission on Human Rights on the draft United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples and the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. During the Decade period, almost 560 indigenous representatives have received assistance to attend the Working Group for Indigenous Populations, 135 representatives have been financed to participate in the Working Group on the draft declaration and 77 indigenous representatives have received financial support since the first session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in 2002.

37. Since the establishment of the Fund, demand from indigenous organizations for support for small projects and travel to United Nations meetings has grown. In 2004, more than 200 eligible project applications and 600 requests from indigenous organizations for travel assistance were received. Only a small portion of these demands could be satisfied. Nonetheless, efforts have been made to make the best use of the modest resources available and ensure that support reaches a wide range of indigenous peoples on an equitable basis.

Participation of indigenous peoples in the work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

38. The General Assembly recommended that special attention be given to improving the extent and effectiveness of indigenous peoples' participation in planning and implementing the activities of the Decade. The programme of

activities recommended that the Coordinator establish an advisory group of persons with relevant knowledge of indigenous issues as well as a board of trustees, including indigenous persons, to make recommendations relating to the Voluntary Fund for the International Decade.

39. In seeking to fulfil the request of the General Assembly, the Coordinator recommended that the Secretary-General appoint indigenous persons to the Board of Trustees of the Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations as places became available. Furthermore, to reduce the administrative costs, it was decided to establish an Advisory Group for the Voluntary Fund for the International Decade, composed of the members of the Board of Trustees as well as the Chairperson of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations and an expert on technical cooperation. The Advisory Group meets back to back with the annual sessions of the Board of Trustees. All members of the Board and five of the seven members of the Advisory Group are indigenous persons. Indigenous experts chair both advisory bodies. The Board of Trustees was the first United Nations body to include indigenous experts, and later to have indigenous experts in its entire composition and this has been a model for other parts of the system. For example, the Advisory Board for the newly-created grant facility for indigenous peoples at the World Bank is composed only of indigenous persons. Indigenous persons representing different regions have, throughout the Decade, been involved directly in advising the Coordinator of the Decade and Secretary-General on how United Nations funds are to be spent on travel to the Working Groups and the Permanent Forum as well as on the projects, workshops, seminars and other activities in the framework of the Decade.

40. OHCHR has invited some 150 indigenous experts to the 15 principal workshops or seminars it has organized in the course of the Decade. All such meetings were chaired by or included a rapporteur from indigenous expert participants.

41. In 2002, OHCHR launched a new programme of human rights training aimed at indigenous communities. The community-led human rights training programme for indigenous peoples is aimed at encouraging and supporting indigenous peoples in designing and organizing their own training activities, adapted to community needs. In 2004, OHCHR will financially support four activities of this kind in the different regions by providing advice, financial assistance and a resource person on human rights.

42. During the Decade, indigenous persons from Australia, Bangladesh, Costa Rica, Ecuador, New Zealand and Norway have been employed by OHCHR. Two indigenous staff now work in the secretariat of the Permanent Forum.

III. United Nations observances

43. In its resolution 49/214, the General Assembly decided that 9 August shall be observed as the International Day of the World's Indigenous People and requested the Secretary-General and Governments to support the observance of the Day. Since 1995, the Day has been celebrated both at United Nations Headquarters in New York and at the United Nations Office at Geneva. In Geneva, the day is celebrated during the annual sessions of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations at the end of July in order to take advantage of the large number of indigenous representatives in Geneva at that time. The High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Director

General of the United Nations Office in Geneva and the Chairperson of the Working Group organize the Day jointly and indigenous peoples present a cultural programme.

Information provided by indigenous peoples

44. As at May 2004, the Office had received reports on the Decade from the following indigenous peoples' organizations: International Indian Treaty Council (United States of America), Grand Council of the Crees (Canada), Institute for the Problems of Indigenous People of the North (Russian Federation), Association Tamaynut (Morocco), Indian Confederation of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples (India) and Ocaprace Internationale (Cameroon).

45. The International Indian Treaty Council reviews developments, particularly developments in the human rights area, welcoming the establishment of the Special Rapporteur on indigenous peoples, the growing jurisprudence on indigenous peoples by the human rights treaty bodies and the studies prepared by experts of the subcommission. It makes reference to opportunities for indigenous participation in United Nations processes. However, it is critical of the lack of progress in the adoption of a draft declaration. The Grand Council of the Crees devotes its entire report of more than 120 pages to the draft declaration, providing detailed support for some of the key articles, criticizing the lack of progress and making proposals for moving the discussions forward.

46. The Institute for the Problems of Indigenous People of the North and the Indian Confederation of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples provide information about the situations in their regions. In the case of the Institute, there is recognition of the improved legislative base for indigenous peoples in the Russian Federation and certain socio-economic programmes. The report expresses concern over the continued expropriation of indigenous lands, pollution and environmental degradation and the persistent problems in health and education for indigenous communities. The Indian Confederation of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples gives information about the situation of the Bodo people of north-eastern India and describes the participation of representatives of indigenous peoples of India in United Nations meetings. The organization states that the participation in United Nations meetings has had an impact on national and state governments which are now more sensitive to indigenous issues.

47. The report presented by Association Tamaynut stresses the strengthening of the Amazigh movement from the countries of North Africa as a result of their participation in United Nations meetings. In 1997 the Amazigh Committee for Development and Human Rights was created in Geneva at the time of the meeting of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations. Subsequently, the movement was active in the establishment of the Indigenous Peoples of Africa Coordinating Committee, an umbrella organization of the indigenous peoples of the continent. The Decade, the report states, has resulted in several positive developments, including the recognition of the Tamazigh language in the constitution of Algeria and the decision, in 2001, to create the Royal Institute of Amazigh Culture in Morocco. Ocaprace Internationale provides information about the situation of pygmies and action taken by the organization to contribute to the improvement of their living conditions.

48. The full statements by these organizations are available at the secretariat of OHCHR.

Information provided by Governments

49. At the time of submission of the present report, the following Governments had provided information: Argentina, Austria, Denmark, Finland, Mexico, Paraguay and the Russian Federation.

50. Argentina referred to key constitutional and legislative measures taken by the Government, in particular article 75 (17) of the 1994 Constitution, which recognizes indigenous peoples and guarantees respect for their identity and their rights, inter alia, to bilingual education, the community lands that they have traditionally occupied and their participation in the management of their natural resources. Argentina has ratified several international treaties, including ILO Convention Number 169 and the convention of the Fund for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean.

51. Austria referred to its development cooperation activities that include indigenous peoples as a target group. The main aims of the programmes are capacity-building, institutional support and encouragement of and support for cultural identity. Support is being given to the "climate coalition" in South America.

52. Denmark provided information about developments during the past 10 years in relation to the indigenous people of Greenland. This included a reference to the Commission on Self-Governance, whose report will be the basis of negotiations between Government and the Greenland Home Rule Government, the Commission of Administration and Justice that will propose reforms in the judicial system relating to indigenous legal traditions, and various activities to support the Greenlandic language. The report also summarizes the judgement by the Supreme Court in relation to the Thule Air Base, built in 1953, which led to the relocation of the indigenous communities in the area. Reference is made to Danish development policy and specifically to the "Strategy for Danish Support to Indigenous Peoples", adopted in 1994. The Danish strategy for indigenous peoples is now under revision.

53. Finland provided information about legislative measures taken regarding the Sami people. In the 1995 Constitution, the Sami people's right to maintain and develop their own language and culture is recognized. Sami language rights were strengthened in 2004 with the entry into force of the Sami Language Act, which guarantees the use of Sami languages by the courts and public authorities in the Sami homeland. According to the Act on the Sami Parliament, the Finnish authorities negotiate with the Parliament in all matters of consequence to them. The report notes that the issue of land rights has been the subject of numerous attempts at settlement but that no proposals have so far been accepted. This has prevented the Government from ratifying ILO Convention Number 169. The Government expresses the view that the negotiations on the draft declaration on indigenous peoples should continue after the end of the Decade, but considers there is no need for a second Decade for that purpose.

54. Mexico reports that the Government has been active in international and regional intergovernmental processes, supporting indigenous participation in the discussions at the United Nations and the Organization of American States (OAS) on the two indigenous declarations. In 2001, it supported together with the

Government of Guatemala the establishment of a special rapporteur on indigenous peoples who visited the country in 2003. The Government supported the creation of the Permanent Forum and supported the renewal of the mandate of a Mexican indigenous expert as one of the governmental members. Mexico has also ratified ILO Convention Number 169. In 2001, the Government approved a constitutional reform regarding indigenous peoples rights, which recognized the multicultural character of the country and the right of self-determination of the indigenous peoples within the constitutional framework. A national programme for the development of indigenous peoples (2001-2006) has been adopted.

55. Paraguay provided information about the work of the Paraguayan Indigenous Institute, which is the governmental body responsible for indigenous policy in the country, in particular in relation to efforts to regularize land rights for indigenous communities.

56. The Russian Federation provided information about a State programme on the "economic and social development of the indigenous minorities of the North until 2011", which is the main national instrument ensuring socio-economic rights of the indigenous peoples of the North. The realization of the Decade is under personal supervision of the President of the Russian Federation and it is noted that the Government supports a second Decade in 2005. The working group on the draft declaration and the establishment of the Permanent Forum were both supported by the Russian Federation. The Government supported the indigenous organization Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North in obtaining consultative status with the Economic and Social Council. In relation to the preservation of the cultural heritage of indigenous peoples, the report refers to the establishment of a national commission on the preservation of non-material culture. A number of bilateral agreements between the Russian Federation and the United States of America have been signed on environmental matters of relevance to the indigenous peoples living in a traditional way in the region of the Baring Straits.

Information received from the United Nations system

57. As of May 2004, the following departments and organizations of the United Nations system had responded to the request for information made by the Coordinator: UN-Habitat, UNFPA, ILO, UNIFEM, DESA, WFP, FAO, the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, WHO, UNICEF, UNCTAD, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Office of Legal Affairs and the Department of Public Information. In addition, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the World Trade Organization also responded. The information provided by these organizations is contained in an addenda to the present report.

IV. Preliminary conclusions

58. **Some preliminary conclusions may be drawn regarding developments within the United Nations system over the 10-year period that may be considered generally positive. In a number of United Nations organizations and specialized agencies there has been an increase in programmes, projects and activities relating to indigenous peoples, as evidenced in the reports contained**

in addenda to the present document. In certain organizations, the change has been dramatic, as in the case of WIPO, which undertook no work on indigenous peoples at the beginning of the Decade, but which, now, as part of its regular budget work, operates a major programme on traditional knowledge and organizes an annual intergovernmental committee meeting on this subject, with more than 100 indigenous organizations accredited. UNITAR, which first began its training programme with indigenous peoples' organizations in 2000, was asked by members of the Permanent Forum to help them prepare for their first session. The report from UN-Habitat, which had previously only peripherally addressed indigenous concerns, has broken new ground with a major joint study in collaboration with OHCHR on indigenous peoples and the right to adequate housing.

59. At the end of the International Decade, indigenous peoples have a greater number of opportunities for funding of their activities than before. OHCHR now supports indigenous peoples' human rights projects and their travel to United Nations meetings, as well the participation of indigenous experts in seminars and workshops. In the course of the Decade, financing from the two indigenous voluntary funds and through the regular budget have provided several million dollars of direct assistance to indigenous organizations in the form of travel grants, human rights training, project support or invitations to expert seminars on the advice of indigenous peoples themselves — a significant sum for a United Nations organization with one of the Organization's more modest budgets. Several other United Nations organizations have provided funding directly to indigenous peoples' organizations and, as the Decade closes, the World Bank has set up a small grants fund for indigenous peoples with an advisory board composed of indigenous persons on the same model as the United Nations Voluntary Fund for the Decade.

60. Indigenous peoples have also been better integrated into the United Nations system's operational activities. ILO, for example, describes in its report its pioneering Indisco project, which promotes self-development cooperatives in indigenous communities as well as the DANIDA-funded programme to promote ILO Convention Number 169. The policy note on indigenous peoples adopted by UNDP constitutes a form of operational directive that is now being mainstreamed into the United Nations development work at the country level. IFAD, FAO and UNICEF have been active in promoting regional approaches on indigenous peoples, in cooperation with Governments and indigenous communities.

61. Information about the United Nations system's work on indigenous peoples is now more widely available both through an increased number of publications and, particularly, on web sites. In terms of participation, as symbolized by the theme of the Decade "Indigenous people: partnership in action", indigenous representatives have many more opportunities to take part in world conferences, international seminars and relevant activities of United Nations agencies than ever before, an opportunity that sometimes puts severe strains on indigenous organizations that have limited resources to travel. For example, in the case of the Convention on Biological Diversity, indigenous peoples have won a formal space in the implementation process through the creation of a working group in which they can fully participate. Furthermore,

several United Nations system organizations include indigenous persons as staff.

62. The seminars and workshops undertaken within the framework of the Decade have served to put lesser known issues relating to indigenous peoples on the international agenda. For example, the expert seminar on indigenous peoples and administration of justice held in Madrid in 2003 produced more than 20 papers by indigenous and non-indigenous professionals on access to justice, customary law and practices and existing cases of legal pluralism. This was the first international meeting of experts on a subject that is increasingly discussed at the policy level in countries where indigenous peoples live, and about which there is little comparative literature.

63. The Decade has also seen far greater cooperation among United Nations agencies than hitherto, an objective that was prioritized in the programme of activities, strengthened through a number of joint activities among agencies during the Decade and institutionalized through the establishment of the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues in 2002. The Inter-Agency Support Group, which includes as members nearly all United Nations departments, programmes, funds and specialized agencies, as well as the World Bank and IADB, meets twice a year to discuss inter-agency cooperation on indigenous issues and cooperates with the Permanent Forum in implementing relevant recommendations.

64. In the course of the Decade, there have been positive institutional developments in relation to the international protection and promotion of the rights of indigenous peoples. The establishment of the Special Rapporteur of the Committee on Human Rights on indigenous peoples, the growing jurisprudence of the treaty bodies on indigenous peoples' group rights, in particular, the monitoring of indigenous issues by both the United Nations treaty and ILO supervisory bodies and the thematic and country rapporteurs of the Commission on Human Rights and the publication of several United Nations studies on critical and complex issues important to indigenous peoples attest to an evolution of thinking and understanding of indigenous peoples' cultures, histories and present-day concerns.

65. Ten years on, indigenous representatives are better aware of the wider system of human rights protection and are increasingly using the opportunities available to them. The efforts made by the treaty bodies and the staff servicing them to meet with indigenous peoples and explain their work has stimulated greater interest, and all OHCHR human rights training activities now include modules aimed at improving knowledge about human rights treaties and their monitoring mechanisms. ILO Convention Number 169, ratified so far by 17 States has become the reference for many indigenous peoples, Member States and intergovernmental organizations in the area of policy and legislative developments and operational activities. At the regional level, OAS is completing the drafting of a declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples of the Americas, and in Africa the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights has established a working group on indigenous peoples and communities.

66. Notwithstanding these positive comments relating to developments during the Decade, there are a number of challenges that remain. On the matter of

human rights protection, two issues have been highlighted. The first relates to the lack of implementation of human rights standards at the national level, as noted repeatedly by the Special Rapporteur on indigenous peoples and, indeed, by the Secretary-General. The second concerns the failure to adopt the draft declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples as recommended in the Decade's programme of activities. Many Member States and indigenous peoples had expected that consensus could be found on indigenous peoples' rights to determine their own futures, to enjoy their lands and resources, to maintain and develop their traditions and cultures and to fully participate in the political, economic and social life of their countries. This has not been the case, and the lack of progress on the declaration will also hold up initiatives in standard setting in other areas of interest to indigenous peoples and will limit the possible elaboration of a policy for indigenous peoples' development that might serve as a framework for the work of the United Nations system globally. As the Decade ends, demands are growing for a new approach that would reinvigorate the discussions, ensure full participation of indigenous observers on the same basis as the Working Group on Indigenous Populations and the Permanent Forum, build confidence and achieve consensus on a final text of a draft declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples for adoption by the General Assembly.

67. **A further challenge relates to the implementation by Member States of programmes that promote the development and rights of indigenous peoples and the United Nations role in assisting them. This constitutes the real test of the Decade, for if there have been few or no measurable improvements in the living conditions of indigenous peoples in many communities, the work of the past 10 years may be deemed incomplete. This means that the United Nations may need to review with Governments and indigenous peoples the way in which indigenous issues have been addressed in country programmes, looking at how indigenous priorities are incorporated into national and regional strategies, promoting a human rights and an indigenous rights-based development, and strengthening inter-agency cooperation with regard to the common goals that have been identified and endorsed by all partners in the development process.**

68. **Whether or not the Member States decide to establish a second decade, it will still be important to maintain the momentum generated, establish an operational framework for further action internationally and, in the countries where indigenous peoples live, set out realizable targets for the medium-term.**

Notes

[1] A/54/487 and Add.1.

[2] General Assembly resolution 50/157, annex, paras. 11-25.

[3] Ibid., para. 15 and 23.

[4] Further information on the Special Rapporteur and his reports can be found at www.unhchr.ch.